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Consideration of reports: reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant

List of issues in relation to the second periodic report of Uzbekistan

Addendum

Replies of Uzbekistan to the list of issues*

[31 January 2014]

Replies to the questions raised in the list of issues (E/C.12/WG/UZB/Q/2)

I. General information

1. Please indicate to what extent the Parliamentary Ombudsman is compliant with the Paris Principles and inform the Committee as to whether steps have been taken to seek accreditation from the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC). Please also provide information regarding the activities undertaken by the Ombudsman in the field of economic, social and cultural rights, including complaints and follow-up thereto, as well as legislative proposals.

1. The establishment of the post of Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of the Oliy Majlis (the parliament) of Uzbekistan was an important step in the development of democratic processes aimed at further streng'hening the status of the individual and guarantees of human and civil rights and freedoms. The Office of the Human Rights Commissioner not only supplements the existing system of human rights guarantees, but is

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

also a new body that provides citizens with additional recourse in the event of the violation or infringement of their rights, freedoms or legitimate interests.

2. In order to ensure that the status of the Human Rights Commissioner is compliant with the Paris Principles, the Ombudsman has created a working group to draw up proposals to improve the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of the Oliy Majlis Act and legislation to grant the Ombudsman greater powers to hear citizens' complaints, in accordance with the international standards for the work of national human rights institutions. In order to create the legal conditions necessary for the participation of the Ombudsman in court hearings when required by exceptionally complex cases, the national law must recognize the Ombudsman as having the right: to bring cases before a court in defence of citizens' rights; to examine civil, criminal and administrative cases for which decisions or sentences have entered into force; to bring cases before bodies that can file complaints under a supervisory procedure; and to bring cases before the Constitutional Court regarding the constitutionality of laws and regulations.

3. As part of the implementation of subparagraph 4.42 of the 2010–2015 Country Programme Action Plan, which was approved by the Government of Uzbekistan, a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project entitled "Capacity-building for national human rights institutions" is being carried out, one of the beneficiaries of which is the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner. Under that project, UNDP in Uzbekistan in 2009 organized an independent assessment of the effectiveness of the Ombudsman's Office, which was carried out by independent expert Richard Carver.

4. Based on the assessment, recommendations were made to improve the work of the Office, including its entry in the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and the Committee's European group.

5. The parliament and the Government have adopted enactments providing better technical resources and equipment and other conditions required for the Ombudsman to work effectively. In addition, the parliament has adopted an Act amending certain laws so as to improve the work of the Human Rights Commissioner.

6. In order to ensure the parliamentary monitoring of the exercise of citizens' economic, social and cultural rights, the Human Rights Commissioner works to improve legislation, receives and considers complaints from citizens, raises awareness and monitors the realization of citizens' social, economic and cultural rights.

7. In 2012 the Human Rights Commissioner submitted proposals for the improvement of bills on the following subjects: protection of private ownership and guarantees of the rights of property owners; family business; amendments to certain laws following the adoption of the Act on the Exchange of Credit Information; reproductive health; social partnership; amendments to certain laws following the adoption of the Competition Act; private banks and financial institutions and financial safeguards; amendments to certain laws to improve microfinancing; amendments to the Road Safety Act; amendments to certain laws following the adoption of the Free Enterprise Act; amendments to article 356 of the Tax Code; and public oversight.

8. The main function of the Human Rights Commissioner is to consider complaints and applications from citizens relating to the violation of civil and human rights and freedoms and to take measures to restore those rights and freedoms.

9. In 2012 the Human Rights Commissioner received 12,826 communications from citizens, including 7,658 complaints and statements at the central office and 895 at regional offices.

10. In nine months in 2013, the Ombudsman received 8,727 communications, including 7,993 complaints and statements at the central office and 734 at regional offices.

11. In 2012 the Human Rights Commissioner prepared 10 written conclusions relating to individual communications from citizens, 3 of which were sent to the Supreme Court and 7 of which were sent to the Office of the Procurator-General. In two cases there was objective evidence and the claims were upheld.

12. The communications taken up by the Commissioner have not varied significantly in terms of subject matter: 4,125 (53.8 per cent) related to the observance and protection of personal rights, 2,238 (29.2 per cent) to the exercise of socioeconomic rights, 339 (5.2 per cent) to political rights, 1 to environmental issues and 895 (11.6 per cent) to other matters.

13. Problems relating to housing and communal services, which were raised in 587 communications, have been the most prevalent.

14. In a total of 452 cases the claims were upheld in 2012.

15. During the reporting year, the majority of complaints relating to labour law originated in Qashqadaryo province, Tashkent province and the city of Tashkent.

16. While in 2011 the Human Rights Commissioner received 485 communications referring to labour law, in 2012 the figure dropped slightly to 408, for the most part from the country's regions. Of these, 169 were followed up and in 34 cases the claims were upheld. The communications related mainly to: disputes over dismissal, downsizing and transfers to other jobs; disputes over actions taken by the management at institutions, organizations and companies; late payment of wages; and problems in receiving letters of employment or other documentation.

17. The number of complaints regarding the actions of the staff or management of educational organizations and institutions decreased significantly. However, the number of complaints contesting the results of tests almost doubled.

Communications relating to the right to education

Right to education	*2012*	*Followed up*	*Resolved positively*
All communications	132	101	15
Regarding the actions of the staff or management of educational organizations or institutions	111	88	14
Contesting the results of tests	17	12	1
Regarding the recognition of foreign diplomas or graduation certificates	4	1	-

18. To help citizens exercise their constitutional right to social security, the Human Rights Commissioner followed up on 191 communications and sent them to the relevant bodies. Of those, in 33 cases the claims were upheld. Most related to pension calculations, the late payment of pensions, retirement upon reaching retirement age or owing to the nature of the work or receipt of material assistance and benefits or entitlements.

19. The number of communications concerning the rights of entrepreneurs has remained steady. Actions by the State and local authorities have drawn much criticism from the public. While in 2010 the total number of communications regarding the rights of entrepreneurs was 179, in 2011 that figure fell to 118 and in 2012 to 111. The majority of applications concerned violations of the rights of entrepreneurs, issues relating to access to credit and violations of farmers' rights.

20. From many of the communications and the issues addressed by them, it is clear that people are not sufficiently aware of their rights or how to exercise them. During the reporting period, the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner clarified the applicable legislation and gave recommendations for resolving the problems raised in response to 919 communications. Telephone hotline services were used by 563 people.

II. Issues relating to the general provisions of the Covenant (arts. 1–5)

Article 1
Right to self-determination and free disposal of natural wealth and resources

2. Please provide information on measures taken to address the disadvantage in relation to the enjoyment of Covenant rights in Karakalpakstan, which is particularly affected by poverty and environmental degradation.

21. The drying up of the Aral Sea has resulted in a complex range of environmental, socioeconomic and demographic problems in the surrounding region, with extensive consequences, such as: climate change, a shortage of drinking water, increased morbidity, an impact on the management of natural resources, decreased employment, a drop in income and a degradation of the gene pool of plant and animal life.

22. Work is being carried out in the Republic of Qoraqalpog'iston (Karakalpakstan) to ensure environmental security, protect the environment, save the Aral Sea and improve public oversight of environmental issues.

23. The Republic of Qoraqalpog'iston has adopted a series of laws and regulations on environmental protection and the sound management of natural resources, including the Environmental Protection Act, the Atmospheric Protection Act, the Protection of Water, and Use of Water Resources Act, the Land Act, the Protection and Use of Flora Act, the Protection and Use of Fauna Act, the Nature Reserves Act, the Environmental Assessment Act and the Forests Act.

24. A State environmental protection system has been created, which is managed by the State Committee for Nature Protection, a specially authorized umbrella coordinating body that ensures State monitoring and intersectoral management in the area of environmental protection and the use and management of natural resources. Other bodies that carry out State monitoring of environmental protection are the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State inspectorate for occupational safety in industry, mining and community services and the State Committee on Land Resources, Geodesy, Cartography and the State Cadastre.

25. Under Decision No. 142 of 27 May 2013, the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan approved a State programme of action for environmental protection for 2013–2017, which includes efforts to improve the environment in the Aral Sea region through: forest reclamation on the dry Aral Sea bed over an area of 80,000 ha; an assessment of the current state of the saiga population on the Ustyurt plateau and actions to save it; the creation of a complete saiga reserve on the Ustyurt plateau; hydrological studies of the lower reaches of the Amu Darya River in order to improve the domestic water supply in dry years; and the mapping of a database of explored freshwater lens reserves near irrigation canals in the lower reaches of the Amu Darya River and the South Aral artesian basin, as an alternative source of water for the people of the Republic of Qoraqalpog'iston.

26. Under Decision No. 135 of 31 May 2013, the Council of Ministers approved a State programme of action for environmental protection for 2013–2017.

27. Under this programme, emissions of harmful substances were reduced by 2,116.7 tons, as 5,564 vehicles were converted to run on natural gas, and commercial fishing waters were provided with 2,884.9 m³ of river and drainage water. Forests were planted on the dry Aral Sea bed over an area of 5,375 ha and an area of 17.1 ha of tainted soil was reclaimed.

28. Decision No. 292 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 31 October 2011 on the programme of State environmental monitoring for 2011–2015 is currently being implemented. A total of 570 samples have been selected for that monitoring: 423 effluent samples, 23 wastewater samples, 64 surface-water samples, 9 groundwater samples and 51 samples of contaminated soil. The results of these studies have been used to address the problems encountered and to bring administrative charges against those responsible for violations.

29. Two research projects have been carried out in Qoraqalpog'iston to develop appropriate farming techniques and use new varieties and hybrids of ornamental, medicinal and edible plants and fodder crops on the salt soils of the southern part of the Republic. A research project entitled "Evaluating the risk of contamination of agricultural products, air and drinking water and its impact on the morbidity of the rural population of Xorazm province" was also conducted, at a total cost of more than 98 million sum.

30. In particular, in order to stabilize the environmental and socioeconomic situation in the Aral Sea region, the State Committee for Nature Protection has aided the replenishment and stabilization of wetlands by diverting flows to the depleted reserves in the Amu Darya delta, in accordance with environmental requirements.

31. In order to prevent a further worsening of the environmental crisis and improve the current environmental situation in the Aral Sea basin, the heads of five Central Asian States decided in 1993 in Qizilorda, Kazakhstan, to establish the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, with its Executive Committee located in Almaty.

32. In 1994, the heads of State of the Central Asian countries and the heads of Government of the Russian Federation met in the town of Nukus to approve a programme of action to assist the countries of the Aral Sea basin, the first Aral Sea Basin Programme, taking into account the socioeconomic development of the region.

33. In 2002 the Heads of State of the countries of Central Asia met in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, to approve the second Aral Sea Basin Programme, covering the period 2003–2010. Implementation of a third programme is planned for the period during which Uzbekistan will chair the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

34. The objectives of these programmes include: creation in the Amu Darya and Syr Darya deltas and adjacent parts of the dry Aral Sea bed of ecosystems using diverted water; development and implementation of programmes to provide clean drinking water; improvement of public health; implementation of programmes to combat natural disasters; support for regional social programmes; desertification control; and development of wetlands.

35. The majority of environmental problems in the Central Asian countries are of a regional (and sometimes crossborder) nature and cannot be resolved by one country alone. Environmental issues can be addressed effectively through constructive cooperation between States. Measures taken by Uzbekistan in response to the environmental crisis in the Aral Sea basin aim to improve the quality of life, increase the supply of clean drinking water and the provision of drainage services and improve water resource management.

36. The stabilization of the environmental and socioeconomic situation in the Aral Sea region will facilitate the implementation of a project entitled "Conservation of Tugai

Forests and Strengthening of the Protected Areas System in the Amu Darya delta of Qoraqalpog'iston". That project is supported by the Global Environment Facility and UNDP in Uzbekistan and is implemented by the State Committee for Nature Protection of Qoraqalpog'iston, in cooperation with the parliament and the government of the Republic of Qoraqalpog'iston, district *hokimiyats* (administrations), village community groups, representatives of private business, the forest management authorities and other relevant ministries and departments.

37. In order to improve environmental conditions in the Aral Sea region, forests have been planted over an area of 740,000 ha in the past 15 years, including 310,000 ha of the dry Aral Sea bed. Salt-resistant varieties that fix shifting sands and largely reduce salt and dust drift are primarily used for such afforestation.

38. Over the past 10 years alone, more than US$ 1 billion has been spent on the implementation of projects and programmes aimed at the environmental rehabilitation of the Aral Sea region, including around US$ 265 million in foreign loans, technical assistance and grants.

39. Environmental protection partnerships with non-governmental, non-profit and civil society organizations have been strengthened. For example, the non-profit organization Ecolandshaft organizes debates, competitions, meetings and discussions on environmental issues at primary schools and academic and vocational secondary schools on the topic of "Major government programmes in the area of environmental protection: engaging NGOs for their implementation".

40. Ecosan, an international foundation, implements projects to provide clean drinking water to remote areas of the country. In 2011, seven joint projects were carried out at a total cost of 278.6 million sum, and in 2013 Ecosan donated disinfectants worth 42 million sum to the authorities in the Republic of Qoraqalpog'iston in order to improve sanitation and the epidemic situation in the region.

41. In order to promote environmental awareness, 73 television programmes and 43 radio programmes were broadcast, in cooperation with the Uzbek and Karakalpak broadcasting companies, and 72 educational articles were published in newspapers on the topic of environmental protection.

42. In order to ensure the socioeconomic rights of citizens of the Republic of Qoraqalpog'iston, a trilateral agreement for 2011–2013 was signed by the Republic's Council of Ministers, its Chamber of Commerce and the Association of Trade Unions of Qoraqalpog'iston.

43. Fourteen regional and municipal sector-based agreements and 2,086 collective agreements covering more than 5,251 legal entities (companies, organizations and institutions) with a total of more than 210,900 employees have been concluded in Qoraqalpog'iston.

44. The Association of Trade Unions of Qoraqalpog'iston places a special emphasis on social support for women and children.

45. Accordingly, the working hours of 196 women who are employed in companies and other non-State organizations and have children under the age of 3 have been limited to 35 hours per week, while their salaries have been maintained. A range of measures aimed at providing material and moral support to low-income families is being carried out through the provision of financial assistance, and financial support is also offered to mothers caring for young children. Over 11 months of 2013, through the various collective agreements, the unions provided financial support to a number of families and to 602 mothers with children aged 2–3 years; interest-free loans were granted to 329 families for housing construction or the purchase of durable goods, and school supplies were purchased for 2,459 children from

low-income families. Moreover, 432 women, including 82 from low-income families, benefited from reduced rates at vacation sanatoriums run under the trade-union system. In 2013 alone, a total of 586 needy single elderly persons, pensioners and persons with disabilities received social assistance.

Article 2, paragraph 2
Non-discrimination

3. Please provide information on the changes introduced to the procedure for the registration of citizens at their place of residence (*propiska*) referred to in paragraphs 370 and 371 of the State party report, and explain to what extent they address the de facto discrimination based on a person's birthplace, residence, urban or rural status, especially for internal migrants, in particular regarding access to employment and housing.

46. The registration of Uzbek citizens at their place of residence by no means infringes upon their right to freedom of movement and choice of residence within the country, with the exception of areas that are closed to the public (for example, border zones), to which entry is permitted upon presentation of a specific document (permit).

47. Registration makes it possible to record migration flows and to use data for economic purposes and social services, to prevent and combat crime and to track down fugitives, alimony defaulters and debtors in cases brought by legal entities and individuals.

48. Procuratorial bodies systematically carry out monitoring activities to prevent violations of the right of citizens to register at their place of residence.

49. The Act of 14 September 2011 on the List of Categories of Uzbek Citizens Subject to Permanent Registration in the City of Tashkent and Tashkent Province and the Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of 16 February 2012 on the same subject set out the list of persons who may permanently reside in Tashkent and Tashkent province. The categories listed are as follows:

(1) Citizens of Uzbekistan (hereinafter "citizens") owning private property in accordance with the law may be registered at the privately owned property in question;

(2) Relatives may be registered at a residence where their first- or second-degree relatives are permanently registered;

(3) Wards may be registered at a residence where their guardians (or trustees) are permanently registered;

(4) Minor biological siblings who do not have parents, and adult biological siblings who are unable to work and do not have families of their own, may be registered at a residence where their biological siblings are permanently registered;

(5) Spouses may be registered at a residence where their husbands or wives are permanently registered, provided they have had at least one year of cohabitation;

(6) Citizens with permanent registration in the city of Tashkent may be registered in the city of Tashkent or Tashkent province if they apply for permanent registration at a different address;

(7) Citizens with permanent registration in Tashkent province may be registered in Tashkent province if they apply for permanent registration at a different address;

(8) Citizens permanently registered previously in the city of Tashkent or Tashkent province may be registered upon their return to the city of Tashkent or Tashkent province for permanent residency after graduation, the end of an employment contract, a long-term business trip or release from prison;

(9) Citizens who are elected, appointed or approved for posts in the Oliy Majlis, the Office of the President or the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan, or upon agreement of the President of Uzbekistan, as well as their family members (spouses and children who do not have families of their own) may be registered for the duration of their stay, to perform their duties;

(10) Citizens elected in accordance with the law to representative bodies of State power, as well as their family members (spouses and children who do not have families of their own) may be registered for the duration of their stay, to perform their duties;

(11) Highly qualified specialists and specialists in certain areas who are invited to work for bodies of State power, State administration and economic management bodies and other State organizations of national significance, at the request of the head of the respective body or organization, as well as their family members (spouses and children who do not have families of their own), may be registered for the duration of their stay, to perform their duties;

(12) Military personnel housed in accordance with the Regulations for housing military personnel of the Armed Forces of Uzbekistan, approved by Presidential Decision No. 694 of 14 September 2007, as well as their family members (spouses and children who do not have families of their own).

50. A look at the figures shows that between 14 May and 31 December 2012, a total of 25,201 Uzbek citizens received permanent residence in Tashkent province (the figure was 30,049 from 1 January to 30 November 2013).

51. According to the figures, most people were registered under the following categories of the above list: category (1) – 2,468 registered (545 over 11 months of 2013); category (2) – 4,007 registered (2,791 over 11 months of 2013); category (5) – 2,349 registered (1,529 over 11 months of 2013); category (6) – 3,204 registered (3,638 over 11 months of 2013); category (7) – 11,330 registered (20,140 over 11 months of 2013); category (8) – 1,102 registered (533 over 11 months of 2013); category (11) – 46 registered (403 over 11 months of 2013); and category (12) – 687 registered (456 over 11 months of 2013).

52. In accordance with the requirements of the Convention on International Civil Aviation of 1944 and the resolutions of the Montreal Assembly sessions of the International Civil Aviation Organization, and on the basis of the Presidential Decrees of 23 June 2009 and 5 January 2011 on measures to further improve the passport system in Uzbekistan, efforts are under way to provide people with biometric passports with electronic data storage devices, and the Regulations on the national passport system and biometric travel documents for stateless persons has been approved. To date, more than 3 million biometric passports and travel documents have been provided to Uzbek citizens and stateless persons.

Article 3
Equal rights of men and women

4. Please provide information on the enforcement of the legislative acts mentioned in paragraph 377 of the State party report and of the Bill on State guarantees of equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women, if adopted, as well as on their impact on women's equal enjoyment of economic, cultural and social rights.

53. Women in Uzbekistan participate in all areas of political, economic and social life, work in ministries and political and State organizations and are employed in the private sector and in business.

54. Women account for 48 per cent of the country's economy. Approximately 1 million new posts open up every year, and over 40 per cent of them are earmarked for women.

55. New enactments, including the following in particular, have played a significant role in increasing the activity of women in society and in the economy: news laws, such as the Family Business Act of 26 April 2012; the Act of 24 September 2012 on the Protection of Private Ownership and Guarantees of the Rights of Property Owners; and the Act of 20 December 2012 on Procedures Permitted in Business Activities.

56. There have also been new presidential decrees, including the Decree of 27 August 2011 on additional measures for the establishment of the most favourable conditions for the development of small business and private enterprise; the Decree of 18 July 2012 on measures for the further fundamental improvement of the business environment and greater entrepreneurial freedom; and the Decree of 22 October 2012 on measures to further improve farming and on the development of farming.

57. New presidential decisions have also been issued, including the Decision of 25 August 2011 on measures to remove bureaucratic obstacles and to further increase entrepreneurial freedom; the Decision of 10 May 2012 on the programme for the development of services for 2012–2016; and the Decision of 17 April 2013 on additional measures to accelerate the development of services in rural areas for 2013–2016.

58. Lastly, new decisions have been issued by the Cabinet of Ministers, including the Decision of 14 August 2013 on measures to give effect to the Act on Procedures Permitted in Business Activities; the Decision of 25 November 2013 on measures for the introduction of a State registration mechanism for entrepreneurial entities through the Internet; the Decision of 17 April 2012 on additional measures for improving family living conditions; the Decision of 30 April 2012 on additional measures for the provision of social support to young families; the Decision of 7 June 2012 on the further improvement of the procedure for assigning social benefits and the provision of a more complete account of total family revenue; and the Decision of 25 May 2011 on additional measures to improve the competitive submission to legal and physical persons of land plots for entrepreneurial activity.

59. To implement the concluding observations and general recommendations Nos. 12, 13, 19 and 23 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, a bill has been drawn up on guarantees of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men. A special article of this bill, article 3, is specifically devoted to preventing discrimination against women. The bill contains the basic tenets of the State's policy to ensure equality between women and men and to extend opportunities for the realization of the full extent of their rights and freedoms to the members of both sexes.

60. Some 300 officials of relevant regional organizations have taken part in 12 seminars held in 10 regions to discuss this bill.

61. In 2013, the bill was discussed in the light of comments from the international expert, Ms. Violeta Neubauer, who presented recommendations on how to improve it.

62. At this stage, the bill is in the consultation stage and is being discussed by the relevant ministries and departments.

63. The potential for the development of entrepreneurship among women and young people in the country's regions has been enhanced. The legislation has been improved so as to ensure a conducive business climate for small businesses and for entrepreneurship and to

provide better quality services for entrepreneurs. The Free Enterprise Act, the Family Business Act and the presidential Decree on measures for the further fundamental improvement of the business environment and greater entrepreneurial freedom have been adopted.

64. Between 2000 and 2012 the proportion of women in the workforce increased from 44 to 45.4 per cent. There was a significant rise in the number of women employed in small businesses and in private enterprise.

65. Commercial banks in 2010 earmarked some 250.6 billion sum to supporting women, carrying out employment programmes and developing entrepreneurial activity; the corresponding figures were in 2011, 335.5 billion sum; in 2012, 491.7 billion sum, and in the first nine months of 2013, 499.5 billion sum.

66. The microcredit bank in 2010 issued 26.1 billion sum in loans, creating 17,000 new jobs; in 2011, it issued 34 billion sum in loans, creating 17,470 new jobs; in 2012, 42.987 billion sum in loans, creating 18,664 new jobs. In the first nine months of 2013 it issued 43.963 billion sum in loans and created 16,642 new jobs through the provision of support to families during the Year of Improvement and Prosperity.

67. Under the "Promoting the Economic Rights of Women in Uzbekistan" project implemented in cooperation with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), assistance has been provided for teaching rural women the basics of entrepreneurship, raising employment levels and incomes and improving the well-being of women through the provision of untaxed microcredits, in six pilot regions: the Republic of Qoraqalpog'iston and in Farg'ona, Qashqadaryo, Jizzax, Sirdaryo and Tashkent provinces.

68. With the cooperation of the German Sparkassenstiftung Foundation, advice and consulting centres have been set up in 13 regions and loans have been issued in remote rural districts and communities. This has helped to spur the development of outworking, or work-from-home, for women, their training in new professions and their acquisition of knowledge in the field of family entrepreneurship.

69. Since these centres began operating, 4,143 women have received advice on the development of businesses and assistance in securing loans independent of any banks. Of these, 130 received loans totalling 1,988,000,000 sum from a revolving loan fund on the basis of this project and started up their own businesses. At least 515 women found decent work through the project.

70. Women's NGOs in Uzbekistan carry out work for the skill enhancement, vocational training and further training of women. The activities of women's organizations account for over 44 per cent of all those who have received professional training or enhanced their skills through the work of NGOs.

71. The country's labour legislation has been amended and supplemented with the active participation of the trade unions, and a provision to provide employment for the victims of human trafficking has been added to the article of the Labour Code on additional guarantees for the placement in employment of certain groups.

72. The council of the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan has recommended that a section regulating the work of women and setting out privileges and guarantees for women and people with family responsibilities should be included in collective agreements and contracts. This recommendation has now been implemented in practice.

III. Issues relating to the specific provisions of the Covenant (arts. 6–15)

Article 6
The right to work

5. Please provide information on the impact of measures taken to reduce unemployment and underemployment in the State party, especially among women and in the rural areas. Please also explain to what extent the introduction of the 2008 regulation on the procedure for reserving jobs for several vulnerable groups, as described in paragraph 484 of the State party report, has led to securing regular employment for them.

73. Every year, in order to provide employment and fight unemployment, especially among young people and women and in rural areas, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, together with the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Qoraqalpog'iston and the regional administrations (*hokimiyats*) of the provinces and of the city of Tashkent, draw up comprehensive job creation and employment programmes that are approved by the chambers of the Oliy Majlis (the national parliament).

74. Thanks to the implementation of the programmes, approximately 1 million new jobs are created every year, about 62 per cent of which are in rural areas. For example, 973,500 new jobs were created in 2012 and over 970,000 in 2013, of which 60 per cent were in rural areas. Over 500,000 young men and women who graduated from vocational colleges found jobs. The programme for job creation and employment in 2014 adopted by the Senate of the Oliy Majlis includes plans for the creation of 983,600 jobs, for example through such measures as the introduction of major new industrial projects; the renewal and expansion of existing enterprises; social, economic and industrial development; construction of individual homes in rural areas; and the further development of private farming.

75. As stipulated in paragraph 4 of the Order on the procedure for reserving jobs for persons requiring social protection and experiencing difficulties finding employment, which was adopted by Decision No. 186 of 20 August 2008 of the Cabinet of Ministers, such assistance is provided by State bodies, locally, and in accordance with the legislation in force.

76. Some 83,700 persons found employment between January and November 2013 under the provisions of the Order. Of these, 16,800 were single parents with disabled children under 14 or with numerous children; 50,700 were young people who had just completed their education; 3,300 were persons who had completed their military service; 4,300 were persons living with disabilities; 2,500 were persons who had reached retirement age; 2,500 were persons released from places of detention; 1,700 were unemployed women with young children; and 1,100 were persons from other vulnerable groups.

77. Various forms of outwork, or work-from-home, and family contracts have become more prevalent in the country. Over 5,000 large enterprises use outworking contracts, and over 45,000 people have concluded such contracts.

78. According to the trade unions, 31,640 people work at home, for 3,278 companies. The wages of people working at home cannot be less than the first category of the Unified Wage Scale. The trade unions pay particular attention to ensuring that people working at home have safe conditions of work and enjoy the benefits provided under collective agreements.

79. Local labour bodies have registered 388,576 people as job seekers, including 351,162 who have found employment and 16,912 who have been assigned to community service schemes. Some 247,000 people have received vocational guidance at 940 job fairs held in the country's regions.

80. Over and above the provision of material assistance by the trade unions, the unions also monitor and check that new jobs are actually created. In 2013 the trade unions monitored the hiring of 168,477 graduates of vocational schools at 5,582 unionized places of employment.

81. In order to encourage activity in small business by young people, including graduates of vocational colleges, and in the framework of the Young Entrepreneurs Support Programme, 47 training seminars, round tables and meetings have been held in cooperation with the regional advisory centres in Buxoro, Qashqadaryo, Navoiy, Samarqand and Surxondaryo provinces and in the city of Tashkent.

82. Under a new programme, "Work and Rest" camps have been held at 59 companies for teens between the ages of 15 and 18. Some 3,200 students of vocational and academic secondary schools thus took part in community service work and leisure activities.

83. The Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan carries out activities in support of family businesses; these include information explaining the advantages of trade union membership in family enterprises.

Article 7
The right to just and favourable conditions of work

6. Please indicate whether the current minimum wage level ensures an adequate standard of living for the workers concerned and their families. Please also provide information on the impact of the measures taken to ensure the enforcement of the minimum wage as well as on the status of the draft Act on remuneration of work mentioned in paragraph 558 of the State party report.

84. The improvement of living standards and the quality of life is the subject of much attention in Uzbekistan. Real incomes increased by 16 per cent in 2013, and average wages of State employees, pensions and social benefits and allowances rose by 20.8 per cent.

85. Currently, the average pension is 37.5 per cent of the average wage. In 2014, it should be 41 per cent.

86. The family income structure has recently been changing, with more than half of all income now attributable to entrepreneurial activities. The highest incomes are eight times greater than the lowest, and the difference has remained at that level in recent years. Increases in income and savings have increased the population's purchasing power. Between 2000 and 2013 there was a 9.5-fold increase in consumer spending.

87. In recent years, in the basket of consumer goods, expenditure on non-food items and services has grown, while there has been a constant increase in the volume of the main food items counted per person. Since independence, consumption of the following foods has increased by: meat, 1.4 times; milk, 1.3 times; vegetables and gourds, 2.6 times; potatoes, 2 times; and fruits, 6.4 times.

88. There has also been a drastic change in the provision of durable non-food goods to families. More families are equipped with modern home appliances such as refrigerators, air conditioners, personal computers, televisions and mobile telephones. The number of people who in recent years have purchased cars, mainly domestically produced, is

particularly telling. In 2000 there were on average 20 cars per 100 families; now there are 41.4. According to surveys, over 11 per cent of households now have two cars.

89. The new version of the Labour Code stipulates that the monthly wages of workers who fully meet the labour standards set for the month and carry out their duties cannot be less than the level set by law for the first category of the Unified Wage Scale. As at 15 December 2013, the wage for the first category was 237,700 sum.

7. Please provide information on the measures taken or envisaged with a view to abolishing the quotas imposed on local administrations for the production of cotton, a system which is not only a violation in itself of a farm owner's free choice of work, but also leads to forced labour, child labour and unfavourable conditions of work. Please provide information on court cases relating to violations of labour rights in cotton plantations and on sentences handed down.

90. In the field of agriculture, since the first days of independence a great deal of attention has been paid to diversifying; improving market relations; developing private farms; building infrastructure; providing services to producers; diverging from cotton monoculture; and providing for grain and food independence in general.

91. In accordance with Presidential Decree No. 4041 of 20 October 2008 on measures for optimizing planted areas and increasing food crop production, the production of raw cotton has declined through contractual agreements by 200,000 tons and the area used for cotton production has been reduced, while the areas planted for grain, vegetable, oilseed and potato production have increased.

92. On the whole, between 1991 and 2012, the areas planted for cotton production were reduced by 520,000 ha. This was related to a review of priorities, with more emphasis placed on the provision of food and on increasing the income of agricultural producers.

93. Consequently, the proportion of government purchases of cotton has fallen, and at the same time raw cotton purchasing prices have increased annually, taking into account the commodity's average world pricing.

94. Currently, State purchases of cotton fibre account for 50 per cent of the actual volume of production. The remainder is controlled by producers and is sold at free market prices.

95. The incentives to produce cotton are exclusively economic in nature. Farms that have increased their cotton yields and production levels are actively promoted. They receive preferential loans from commercial banks for the purchase of agricultural equipment and are given 10 extra points in competitions for the assignment of agricultural production plots.

96. Until 2010, 50 per cent of the country's cotton harvesting equipment was purchased using preferential 3 per cent loans. The figure has now risen to over 60 per cent.

97. Much attention has been paid to the mechanization of cotton harvesting. In 2013 over 1,000 cotton harvesting machines produced in the Tashkent tractor factory took part in the harvest. For 2014 there are plans to produce and put into service over 3,000 such machines, all produced in Uzbekistan. By 2016, it is foreseen that between 80 and 90 per cent of the cotton harvest will be done by machines.

98. In Uzbekistan, cotton is produced by the non-State sector, i.e., by family farms, and its harvest is carried out mainly by the farmers' family members. Hiring additional workers, including children, is not economical. Participation by children over 16 who are members of the farmers' families is considered to be work in a family enterprise, which is not a violation of international labour law and is in conformity inter alia with the Minimum Age

(Non-Industrial Employment) Convention (Revised), 1937 (No. 60) of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

99. On 26 March 2012 the Government adopted a Decision on additional measures for implementing in 2012–2013 the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), ratified by Uzbekistan.

100. A system of State institutions has been set up to prevent the worst forms of child labour. A special government commission on the affairs of juveniles is in operation, headed by the Procurator-General. It is competent for taking decisions on virtually all matters relating to the status of children in society, including monitoring the prevention of the worst forms of child labour. Legal inspectorates and inspectorates for labour protection, attached to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, are operating to provide State oversight for the prevention of violations of labour law. On 24 March 2011, the Government issued a Decision establishing an interdepartmental working group to prepare and submit information on the implementation of the ILO conventions which Uzbekistan has ratified.

101. A Decision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the Ministry of Health issued jointly on 21 January 2010 approved regulations prohibiting the use of child labour.

102. The country office of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Uzbekistan has concluded, on the basis of information from monitoring activities conducted in 2012, that schoolchildren have not been employed in the harvesting of cotton. In 2013, ILO experts took part in monitoring activities during the cotton harvest.

8. Please elaborate on the measures taken by the State party, and the impact thereof, to address the root causes of the migration of a considerable number of workers from the State party to neighbouring countries and explain the measures taken by the State party to prevent these workers falling into situations of servitude or slavery. Please also inform the Committee as to the extent to which the new regulations introduced to fight against trafficking constitute an obstacle to labour migration.

103. A number of enactments have been adopted to ensure respect for the interests of individuals, society and the State in the implementation of migration programmes and measures; to set up migration controls and regulate migration flows taking into account the social and economic development of the region in question; and to establish conditions for the reception and accommodation of immigrants so as to encourage their active participation in social and economic development. These include, among others: the Citizenship Act of 1992; the Act of 29 January 2013 on the Accession of Uzbekistan to the Agreement on Cooperation between Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States to Control Illegal Migration; the Presidential Decree of 1992 approving the Regulations on the procedure for reviewing matters relating to Uzbek citizenship; the Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of 1995 on the Procedure for Uzbek citizens working in other countries and for foreign citizens working in Uzbekistan; the Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of 1996 on the Procedure for entry and exit, temporary residence in and transit through Uzbekistan of foreign nationals and stateless persons; and the Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of 2007 on the improvement of the registration of Uzbek citizens travelling abroad to work.

104. These enactments establish the rights and duties of foreign citizens and stateless people within Uzbekistan and the basis for charging them with administrative or criminal offences related to illegal migration (article 225 of the Administrative Liability Code and articles 223 and 224 of the Criminal Code).

105. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2,787 persons entered Uzbekistan and 24,991 left the country in a nine-month period of 2013 (in the same period of 2012, the figures were respectively 1,967 and 28,979).

106. Administrative charges were filed against 6,168 foreign citizens and stateless persons (in the same period of 2012, the figure was 7,910). Of these, 440 (465 in 2012) were nationals of non-CIS countries and 4,936 (6,620 in 2012) were citizens of CIS member States. The number of stateless persons charged with such offences was 792 in 2013 and 825 in 2012.

107. Five thousand foreign citizens and stateless persons were deported from Uzbekistan (in the same period of 2012, the figure was 6,656), including 321 foreign citizens (356 in 2012), 4,654 citizens of CIS member States (6,290 in 2012) and 25 stateless persons (10 in 2012).

108. A registry of labour migration has been started at the local level. Each community registers and monitors the population in a registry book. Such books are constantly updated, thus helping to keep track of the volume of the country's internal and external labour migration flows.

109. A monitoring system has been developed to keep track of the implementation of the agreements signed in July 2007 between the Governments of the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan to regulate migration between the two countries. Surveys of migrant workers have revealed that there are problems. The agreements on readmission, on work and the protection of migrant workers of the Russian Federation in Uzbekistan and of Uzbekistan in the Russian Federation and on controlling illegal migration are still not fully functional.

110. To provide greater work opportunities for Uzbek citizens in other countries, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection has set up an External Labour Migration Agency, and regional offices have been established in Tashkent, Buxoro, Nukus, Farg'ona and Qarshi for the placement of Uzbeks in jobs in other countries. The Agency has a Centre which helps Uzbeks who travel for work to other countries to adapt and learn what they need to know prior to their departure.

111. An agreement on the control of illegal migration has been signed between the Governments of the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Uzbekistan has signed agreements on cross-border cooperation with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Uzbekistan has signed readmission agreements with Bulgaria, Latvia and the Russian Federation.

112. Uzbekistan has since 1995 had interdepartmental agreements with the Republic of Korea that provide for stable, developed relations in the field of labour migration.

113. Preliminary international agreements have been concluded with Ukraine, the Czech Republic and Norway, and domestic procedures are now under way to adopt draft agreements on controlling illegal migration. In May 2012 a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

114. Information campaigns are conducted to defend the rights and interests of Uzbek and foreign citizens and prevent human trafficking, and also to ensure the effective job placement of Uzbeks who leave the country to work. Posters and banners have been put up everywhere to warn of the dangers and consequences of human trafficking; over a million easy-to-use educational manuals and teaching materials have been published and distributed, and over 300,000 posters and 1,850 banners have been produced. They have been displayed in densely populated areas and in bus and train stations and airports.

115. For people departing to take up jobs in the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has produced two booklets under the titles "Memo for persons taking employment in the Russian Federation" and "Memo for persons taking employment in Kazakhstan".

116. Uzbek consulates overseas pay particular attention to issues related to the protection of the legal rights and interests of Uzbek citizens and to providing them with comprehensive assistance. Despite measures taken by the State, there are still some negative factors related to the migration to other countries of Uzbek workers.

117. An analysis of the migration of Uzbek citizens shows that along with legal migration carried out under the appropriate contracts signed inter alia through the External Labour Migration Agency of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, there is also a category of so-called "illegal migrants" who leave Uzbekistan without visas and violate the immigration laws of host countries.

118. The men and women who leave to seek work mainly in CIS countries (Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Ukraine) and wind up becoming victims of human trafficking are this kind of migrants. This category of migrants more often become victims of violence, slavery or coercion on the part of their employers and may wind up being "re-sold".

119. The lack of legal discipline, weak knowledge of Russian and unwarranted faith of Uzbeks in the "advice" offered by relatives and acquaintances are some of the main problems encountered in defending rights and interests of such migrants.

120. From an analysis of the information available from Uzbek consulates, we may conclude that:

- In the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, China and Moldova, victims of human trafficking have been exploited as workers;
- In the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Azerbaijan, India, Pakistan, China, Indonesia and Thailand, victims of human trafficking have been forced into prostitution;
- Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Turkey, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Oman serve as countries of transit for the transfer of victims of human trafficking to other countries.

121. The following measures are taken by Uzbek consulates to assist victims of human trafficking.

122. The Uzbek Embassy in Moscow and Consulate General in Novosibirsk have brought to light 45 cases of human trafficking involving Uzbek citizens. When they first received information on such persons, if they lacked identification documents, they quickly issued certificates allowing them to return to Uzbekistan, established communications between them and their relatives and took stock of their financial situation so as to purchase tickets for their subsequent return home.

123. The Embassy of Uzbekistan in Kazakhstan has helped the following 10 Uzbek citizens return home: Zilola Muradilloevna Tuhtaeva, Turg'untosh Suyunovna Turakulova, Mamura Mamurovna Ahmadalieva, Guzal Lesbek-qizi Argunbaeva, Olga Konstantinovna Puchkova, J. Bahriddinov, S. Turdiniyoziov, T. Rahmonberdiev, O. Turdiniyozov and R. Abdullaev.

124. Citizens of Uzbekistan who were victimized by employers rapidly received the necessary legal assistance and were sent to Uzbekistan.

125. The Embassy of Uzbekistan in Baku brought to light three cases of human trafficking involving Uzbek citizens. All three cases were directly related to sex trafficking. Two took place in Azerbaijan and one in Georgia.

126. The Consulate General in Dubai helped Iroda Irisbek-qizi Sultanova, an Uzbek citizen born on 12 August 1990 in Jizzax, to return to Uzbekistan.

127. So far, over 1,200 victims of human trafficking have received medical, psychological and social assistance at the 30-bed National Rehabilitation Centre to Assist and Protect Victims of Human Trafficking.

128. The Ministry of Internal Affairs works constantly with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Committee for State Border Protection of the National Security Service and the Office of the Procurator-General to carry out preventive measures to find and close down channels used for illegal migration and to track money flows through CIS member States.

9. Please provide updated information on the percentage of workers employed in the informal economy and on the percentage of companies falling into the category of "small enterprises" operating in the informal economy. Are "small enterprises" subject to inspections by the State Public Health Inspectorate and the State Legal Inspectorate of Labour? Please provide information, including statistical data, on the impact of the enforcement of the 2007 Administrative Liability Code, mentioned in paragraph 478 of the State party report, on businesses and the protection of the right of workers in the informal economy to just and favourable conditions of work.

129. A mixed economy is taking shape in Uzbekistan, with small business and private enterprise taking the lead. Measures to stimulate and greatly simplify the registration of small businesses and the introduction of an effective mechanism to defend the rights and interests of entrepreneurs help to foster the further development and strengthening of this important sector. Small business, as the most important sector providing a firm base for the economy, serves as the main source for meeting needs for basic necessities and services on the domestic market. In 2013 alone, over 26,000 small businesses opened. By the end of the year there were some 190,000 companies in this sector.

130. At this stage, small businesses produce 55.8 per cent of the gross domestic product, as against 31 per cent in 2000; they now account for 23 per cent of all industrial production, practically all market services, 18 per cent of exports and 75 per cent of all the workforce in the economic sectors. From 2005 to 2013, over 7 million new jobs were created, and 60 per cent of them were in small businesses and private enterprise. As a result, over 75 per cent of the country's workforce is now employed in this sector.

131. Thanks to the rapid development of small business and private enterprise and their dominating position in the economy, Uzbekistan was able to cope with the adverse consequences of the world financial crisis less painfully and with less losses and was able to restructure its production in line with the changing economics of the world market. Annual growth in the gross domestic product was over 8 per cent between 2008 and 2013.

132. According to the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, the number of private businesses, not counting private farms, stood at 266,261 at the end of the third quarter of 2013, of which 52,745 (or 19.8 per cent) were large businesses and 213,516 (or 80.2 per cent) were small businesses. Some 970,000 persons, 60.3 per cent of whom were in rural areas, found employment in 2013 thanks to regional job creation and employment programmes. This includes 480,000 jobs that were created in small, micro- and individual businesses and over 210,000 jobs that were created thanks to the expansion of work-from-home schemes. Over 500,000 graduates of vocational schools found employment in 2013. Graduates who decided to start their own businesses received over 140 billion sum in microcredit on preferential terms.

133. The Decision of 25 May 2011 of the Cabinet of Ministers on additional measures to improve the competitive submission to legal and physical persons of land plots for

entrepreneurial activity devotes a great deal of attention to supporting entrepreneurial endeavours. It provides for transparency, openness and objectivity in the holding of competitions and in decision-making, ensuring a level playing field for participants and calling for the regular publication in the media (including on the Internet) of the list of land plots offered to entrepreneurs for sale or lease.

134. The Presidential Decision of 17 April 2013 on additional measures to accelerate the development of services in rural areas for 2013–2016 calls for the leasing to entrepreneurs of buildings and premises belonging to the State and the assignment of land plots to foster the provision of services; entrepreneurs benefit from a "one-stop counter" that helps them with the necessary documentation, and they are exempt from auditing for the period from 2013 to 2016.

135. Article 11 of the Tax Code establishes a principle according to which taxpayers are presumed to be truthful. Under this principle, any contradictions or ambiguities that may inevitably arise in the tax law must be interpreted in favour of the taxpayer.

136. A presidential decree was adopted on 16 July 2012 on measures for the drastic reduction of statistical, tax and financial reporting, activities requiring licensing and authorization procedures. Its aim is to cut back on red tape and reduce outdated licensing and authorization procedures and statistical, financial and tax reporting and to improve the system for the submission of such information.

137. Thanks to the measures taken, over 89 per cent of enterprises now use electronic filing for their tax statements and about 86 per cent file statistical information electronically.

138. A principle has been introduced giving primacy to the rights of entrepreneurs. In 2013 alone, over 80 authorization procedures and 15 activities requiring licensing were eliminated, 65 statistical reports were simplified and the reporting frequency of 23 others was reduced, 22 interactive tax services were introduced, the periods required for the issuance of required authorizations were cut in half and the cost of such procedures was cut fivefold. Other measures have been taken as well. For example, fees for authorization procedures have been reduced eightfold, and the fees for opening bank accounts have been eliminated.

139. Uzbekistan has risen 66 places in the ranking of countries for ease of registration of businesses and now rates twenty-first among the 189 countries included in the rating. For the credit system, it is in twenty-fourth place.

10. Please indicate how the principle of equal pay for work of equal value is protected in the State party's legislation and in practice.

140. Article 6 of the Labour Code prohibits discrimination in employment and reads as follows: "All citizens have equal opportunities to acquire and exercise labour rights. The imposition of any restrictions or the granting of privileges in labour relations on grounds of sex, age, race, nationality, language, social origin, property or official status, attitude to religion, opinions, membership of civil society associations or other circumstances unrelated to a worker's professional qualities or the results of his work is not permitted and constitutes discrimination."

141. Chapter IX of the Labour Code specifically regulates remuneration. Article 153 stipulates that remuneration is specified by agreement between the employer and the employee. Remuneration cannot be lower than the prescribed minimum and is not subject to any upper limit.

142. The forms and systems for the payment of wages, bonuses, premiums, increments and incentives are set out in collective agreements and in other documents adopted by

employers locally, with the consent of the trade union committee or other body representative of the workers. The minimum wage is established by law for workers in institutions and organizations funded from the State budget and in State enterprises.

143. In locations with harsh climates or difficult living conditions, wages are increased by a coefficient or allowance for the district in question. The list of such places and the amounts and modalities for such payments are set by the Government.

144. Under articles 154 and 155 of the Labour Code, employers, regardless of their financial situation, must pay employees within the period set by article 161 of the Code for the work performed, in accordance with the established conditions for the payment of wages.

145. The minimum wage does not include premiums, increments, incentives, remuneration for work performed outside normal working hours (arts. 157 and 158) or coefficients for the district where the work is done (art. 153, part 4).

146. Articles 156 to 161 of the Labour Code establish standards for changes in the conditions of remuneration; for remuneration of overtime work and work on weekends and holidays; for remuneration for night work; for remuneration for work producing defective goods or during downtime; for remuneration when workers hold several jobs or work part-time; and for where and when wages are to be paid.

147. In practice, the basis for determining remuneration is the minimum wage, which is set twice a year by presidential decrees as a minimum social guarantee applicable throughout the country.

148. In accordance with Presidential Decision No. 1675 of 30 December 2011, as from 1 January 2012, the first category of the Unified Wage Scale has been recognized as the baseline grade, and the previous entry level (category zero) grade has been eliminated. It has also been stipulated that wages at all organizations in the country must not be lower than the first category of the Unified Wage Scale. This made it possible to increase the wages of the lowest-paid workers by 2.476 times.

149. Decision No. 6 of 11 January 2012 of the Cabinet of Ministers gives self-financing enterprises and organizations using the Unified Wage Scale the possibility of establishing wage coefficients related to their financial capacities and results.

150. To facilitate the establishment of wage scales in accordance with the principle of equal pay for work of equal value done by men and women, with the agreement of the trade unions, an objective assessment is performed of the work done. The assessment is conducted by analysing the production processes used to establish categories for jobs, regardless of the sex of the workers who perform them. Newly introduced labour standards are approved by the trade unions.

Article 9
The right to social security

11. Please provide information on the eligibility requirement for the various social security schemes in the State party, and indicate which are based on contributions. Please also provide the percentage of the population covered by each scheme, together with information on the assistance and services available to those who are not covered by the social security system. Please explain to what extent the revised amounts of social security benefits, as indicated in the State party report, enable an adequate standard of living for the recipients and their families.

151. Since 1997, annual State programmes have been adopted annually in Uzbekistan to provide additional support to socially vulnerable groups, including children, women, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons living alone and large and low-income families. In recent years the following State programmes and plans have been adopted, among others: the Year of the Harmoniously Developed Generation programme, adopted on 27 January 2010; the Year of Private Enterprise and Small Business programme, adopted on 7 February 2011; the Year of the Family programme, adopted on 27 February 2012; the Year of Well-being and Prosperity programme, adopted on 14 February 2013; the Year of Child Health progamme (prepared for 2014); the plan of additional measures to improve the education of children and raise a healthy and harmoniously developed generation, adopted on of 14 October 2011; and the plan of additional measures to implement in 2012–2013 the ILO Conventions ratified by Uzbekistan concerning forced or compulsory labour and the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, adopted on 26 March 2012.

152. The State programmes are aimed at achieving important objectives for the socioeconomic development of the country and increased access to education, qualified medical care and targeted social security for socially vulnerable groups.

153. Some 6.930 trillion sum and more than US$ 471 million were spent on implementing the Year of Well-being and Prosperity. In 2013 almost 68 billion sum was allocated for consumer loans for rural citizens for the purchase of household appliances, and mortgages exceeding 346 billion sum (10 per cent more than in 2012) were granted to young families as financial support for the construction or purchase of homes.

154. Under a State programme, medical check-ups were carried out on 7 million women of childbearing age and 7.3 million children, and qualified medical care was provided to 195,000 elderly persons living alone, disabled persons and pensioners.

155. Over the course of 2013, State funding in the amount of 311 billion sum was spent to put 146 modern medical facilities into operation.

156. In order to develop the education system, 756 educational establishments, children's music and art schools and children's sports facilities were built, renovated or given major repairs. Modern computer facilities, teaching laboratories and workshops were set up and provided with the necessary equipment. In 2013, under a programme aimed at further improving the system of foreign language teaching, intensive language study was initiated in general-education schools from the first grade. This has created new opportunities to introduce children to international achievements in the fields of science and culture.

157. In 2013, summer health camps were organized for 300,000 children, including 4,500 students from the Aral Sea region and 75,000 children from low-income families, for whom concessionary rates were offered.

158. The State programme placed special emphasis on the construction of new homes; 10,000 standard-design homes were built in 147 districts and long-term, preferential loans totalling 1.4 trillion sum were granted for this purpose. During the year, work was carried out on the construction and restoration of roads and the development of transport infrastructure. Rebuilding and repair work was carried out on 530 km of the Uzbek national highway, and repairs were carried out on more than 890 km of national roads linking rural villages and on more than 200 km of streets in towns and villages.

159. In addition, in order to ensure a steady improvement of incomes and standard of living and the enhancement of social support, under a presidential decree, salaries were increased for employees of State-funded institutions and organizations and pensions, allowances and benefits too rose.

160. Self-supporting companies and organizations have been raising salaries in accordance with the minimum wage established by presidential decree, thanks to increases in productivity and decreases in labour costs.

161. Over the past 10 years the national minimum wage has been raised more than 11 times. On 1 January 2012, the first category of the Unified Wage Scale was established as the baseline pay grade on a nationwide basis. This has made it possible to increase the wages of low-paid workers by a factor of 2.5.

162. Social programmes are implemented with the support of NGOs, including the Mahalla Charitable Fund. The Fund has 14 regional branches and participates actively in State and regional socioeconomic development programmes.

163. Of the 86 items in the State programme for the Year of Well-being and Prosperity, 19 were directly related to the work of the Mahalla Charitable Fund. The Fund provided some 3,995 billion sum in social assistance to low-income families. To date, it has disbursed 11,389.46 billion sum, including 3,081.32 billion sum of its own funds and 2,895.44 billion sum in sponsors' funds. It has covered educational costs for 163 students with disabilities and for orphans at institutions of higher learning, organized summer health camps for 2,489 children, provided winter clothing to 94,806 children from low-income families, donated computers to 39 gifted students, allocated furniture sets to 10 students with disabilities, helped 573 young women from low-income families organize their weddings, granted financial support in the amount of 40,000 sum to low-income families, allocated a head of cattle to each of 626 low-income families and provided 579 low-income families with household appliances.

Article 11
The right to an adequate standard of living

12. Please provide data, disaggregated by sex, region and district, and year, on the percentage of the population living under the poverty line. Please provide information on measures taken to combat poverty in small towns, in rural areas, in some regions such as the Fergana region, and among families who do not own land plots and are forced to take up seasonal agriculture work.

164. Thanks to the socioeconomic measures that have been taken, the poverty rate decreased by a factor of 1.8 between 2001 and 2012 and stood at 15 per cent in 2012. Tashkent had the lowest rate of poverty during that period; in 2012 it was 7.5 times lower than the national average. Meanwhile, the gap between the poverty rates observed in the provinces stood steady; the highest poverty rates were three times higher than the lowest.

165. Interregional disparities in poverty rates were kept in check during the reform years by a proactive social policy involving investment in human capital in the areas of education, health and housing, effective income policies and social protection of vulnerable groups.

166. Social protection and the prevention of a large-scale drop in the standard of living have been ensured through a State support system that indexes wages, compensation, benefits, grants and consumer subsidies.

167. A series of enactments have been adopted in recent years to improve people's financial well-being, including: presidential decrees increasing wages, pensions, stipends and allowances twice a year; the Presidential Decree of 30 March 2010 on further support for the development of national artistic trades and applied arts; the Presidential Decision of 30 May 2011 on additional measures for 2011–2015 for further strengthening the social protection of single elderly persons, pensioners and persons with disabilities; the

Presidential Decision of 10 May 2012 on the programme for the development of services for 2012–2016; the Cabinet of Ministers Decision of 15 February 2013 approving the Regulations for the allocation and payment of social benefits and financial support to low-income families; the Cabinet of Ministers Decision of 17 April 2012 on additional measures for improving family living conditions; and the Cabinet of Ministers Decision of 30 April 2012 on additional measures for the provision of social support to young families.

168. Under the Cabinet of Ministers Decision of 12 December 2012 on measures to further improve the procedure for the allocation and payment of social benefits, as of 1 December 2013 families with children under 18 receive monthly allowances equal to varying proportions of the minimum wage: one-child families receive 50 per cent; two-child families receive 80 per cent; and families with more than two children receive 100 per cent.

169. The Institute for Social Research, which operates under the Cabinet of Ministers, is charged with the task of preparing reports on the structure of household incomes and trends in the number of low-income families in each region of the country.

170. The period since 2008 has been a unique phase in the country's development, owing to the global financial and economic crisis. Under the programme of anti-crisis measures adopted by Uzbekistan in 2009, additional steps were taken to significantly increase the number of new jobs through the implementation of investment programmes, support for the banking system and enterprises in the real economy, modernization, technical upgrading of production, the widespread introduction of innovative technologies and a comprehensive stimulus for small business. A special focus has been placed on employment and incomes, the implementation of a package of specific programmes to develop social infrastructure and the services sector and a strengthening of targeted social protection provided through local governance bodies.

171. As a result, levels of poverty decreased significantly in all provinces. Between 2004 and 2012 that indicator dropped by more than two-thirds in the city of Tashkent, by more than half in Tashkent and Andijon provinces and by a factor of more than 1.5 in all other provinces.

172. In Farg'ona province the poverty rate dropped by a factor of 1.7 between 2004 and 2012 thanks to urbanization and the development and placement of production and social infrastructure in rural areas, which created jobs and improved standards of living among the rural population.

173. Sixty-one per cent of the jobs created under the annual job creation and employment promotion programmes have been in rural areas, including 56 per cent in Farg'ona province.

174. As part of the Year of Well-being and Prosperity, 3,600 citizens who had been unable to compete in the job market and had been struggling to find work were employed in quota-based jobs. In remote rural districts of the province, 212 women in need of social protection were retrained and given free sewing machines. Forty-three persons in the province received preferential loans, 8,722 members of low-income families that had lost breadwinners were granted financial support by companies, organizations, institutions and trade unions amounting to 1,161.3 million sum and 816 members of landless families living in rural areas were given young cattle free of charge.

175. The trade unions are currently helping to legislate on labour relations for farm workers. As a result, 41,590 employees of 8,318 farms in Farg'ona province have drawn up employment contracts and obtained employment records.

13. Please provide information on the measures taken to implement the Committee's recommendation on rural development and agrarian reform. Please

inform the Committee as to how the allocation of farming land parcels, mentioned in paragraph 497 of the State party report, has been carried out, and of the conditions attached to these allocations.

176. Since independence, far-reaching measures have been taken for the economic reform of the agricultural sector by establishing market relations and developing private ownership in the countryside. The Land Code and the Farming Act have been adopted, along with other enactments that create a sound legal framework and guarantees for the development of private farming and the economic and financial independence of farms.

177. The most important element, and the basis for the formation and development of farms, has been the transfer of agricultural land into long-term leasehold ownership and the introduction of market relations in the countryside. This has led to a real sense of ownership of the land and its productive output.

178. Presidential Decree No. 3342 of 27 October 2003 on the strategic framework for developing private farms in the period 2004–2006 laid down the parameters for the development of agricultural production and market infrastructure and the transformation of unprofitable, uneconomical *shirkats* (agricultural cooperatives) into farms. Around 70,000 farms have been created through the reorganization of 666 cooperatives.

179. To create the conditions necessary for the accelerated development of farms as the main source of agricultural production, and to implement Presidential Decree No. F-2069 of 4 November 2004 on the creation of a special commission to prepare proposals for the accelerated development of farms in 2005–2007, a programme for transforming failing, unprofitable and uneconomical agricultural cooperatives into farms for 2005–2007 was approved under Decision No. 607 of 24 December of the Cabinet of Ministers.

180. The programme provided for the transformation of 1,110 failing, unprofitable and uneconomical agricultural cooperatives into farms during the period 2005–2007. Accordingly, 406 uneconomical cooperatives were reorganized into farms on a competitive basis in 2005, 370 in 2006 and 334 in 2007.

181. By 1 January 2011, as a result of the adoption of Presidential Order No. 3077 of 6 October 2008 on the formation of a special commission to draw up proposals on measures to optimize the size of land plots belonging to farms, the number of farms had decreased by more than 153,000 and their average size had increased from 27 ha to 80 ha.

182. Under a programme aimed at creating new businesses that used mini-technologies and compact equipment to process meat and dairy products and at setting up raw milk collection points, commercial banks opened special credit lines, dedicating at least 20 per cent of their loan portfolios to loans and leases for producers, farms, agricultural firms and other businesses at interest rates not exceeding the refinancing rate of the Central Bank of Uzbekistan.

183. The measures to stimulate the development of farms have helped render that development more sustainable and effective. From 2000 to 2012, the contribution of private farming to gross agricultural output increased by 29.3 percentage points and in 2012 stood at 34.4 per cent. Private farms are the primary producers of raw cotton (18.3 per cent in 2000 and 99.4 per cent in 2012) and cereal crops (14.5 per cent in 2000 and 80.7 per cent in 2012).

184. The optimization of the size of farms is still under way. Pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 4478 of 22 October 2012 on measures to further improve farming and on the development of farming, and in order to ensure that the rights and legitimate interests of farmers are respected, a programme of measures to further improve the legal and regulatory basis for the development of farming has been approved; it is aimed at strengthening the economic independence and financial sustainability of farms. Farmers have at their own

initiative set up the Farmers Council of Uzbekistan and farmers' councils in the Republic of Qoraqalpog'iston and various provinces and districts, and they have tasked them with: protecting the rights and legitimate interests of farmers, including in legal proceedings and in relations with State and economic bodies, local authorities, suppliers and logistics and maintenance organizations; carrying out public oversight in order to ensure openness, transparency and legality in the creation and reorganization of farms; and allocating long-term land leases to private farms. Farmers' councils have the right to bring legal action in the interests of farms and to take action in court against the decisions of State and economic management bodies and local authorities or the actions (or omissions) of their officials, without paying State taxes.

185. Farmland may be subjected to optimization or liquidation either on a voluntary basis or as a result of a failure by the farm to abide by a contract or to operate economically. The optimization of land on a voluntary basis may involve either an increase or a reduction in the size of the parcel. A reduction is carried out when the farm's manager lodges an application with the district or town *hokim* (chief administrator). Increases to the size of the plot are made on a competitive basis, through the granting of long-term leases for State-owned land, according to a procedure prescribed by law.

186. While production volumes of the most important raw and export crop (raw cotton) have remained relatively stable, the ongoing policy for the optimization of cultivated areas and crop zoning has resulted in a manifold increase in the production of other crops. In particular, grain production has doubled since 2000, production of potatoes has risen by a factor of 3.1, of vegetables by a factor of 3.2, grape production has doubled and the production of meat and milk has risen by a factor of 2.1 and of eggs by a factor of 3.4.

187. There were record harvests of grain (7.8 million tons) vegetables (8.4 million tons) and raw cotton (over 3.360 million tons) in 2013.

14. Please clarify the information provided in paragraph 744 of the State party report in relation to forced evictions without the provision of alternative accommodation, which is not in conformity with article 11 of the Covenant and general comment No. 7 of the Committee, on forced evictions. Please also provide statistical data on homelessness in the State party.

188. Article 79 of the Housing Code stipulates that employees who have terminated their employment with a company, institution or organization, individuals in elected positions and military personnel, as well as all persons living with them, are subject in certain cases specified by law to eviction from their official living quarters, without the provision of alternative accommodation.

189. If, upon expiry of the lease for the official living quarters, the tenant, members of his/her family or persons living with him or her on a permanent basis refuse to leave the premises, they are subject by law to eviction by order of a court, without the provision of alternative accommodation, except in cases provided for under article 80 of the Housing Code.

190. Article 80 stipulates that the following categories of citizens must be offered alternative housing upon eviction from official living quarters: persons with category I or II disabilities; veterans of the Second World War and overseas wars; families of military personnel who have died or have gone missing in action; families with children with disabilities; foster parents in the case of the closing down of a foster home; persons who have worked or served in organizations that have provided them with official living quarters for at least 10 years; persons discharged from jobs for which they were provided with official living quarters but who have not terminated their employment with the company, institution or organization that provided that accommodation; persons whose employment contracts have been terminated owing to changes in the number of employees

(workforce), changes in the nature of the work or the liquidation of the company, institution or organization; employees who have retired from the company, institution or organization in which they worked; the family members of a deceased person who was provided with official living quarters; and single persons with children who are minors living with them.

191. Articles 84 and 85 of the Housing Code stipulate that accommodation at residential homes for persons with disabilities, veterans or elderly persons living alone, at children's homes or at homes with other special purposes is provided by a decision taken by the body that established the institution in question.

192. Eviction from special-purpose accommodation takes place in the manner and under the conditions set out in the Housing Code and other legislative acts.

193. Persons who have terminated their employment or service and persons who have completed their studies in an educational institution are subject to eviction from the dormitory/residence provided to them during the period of work, service or study, without the provision of alternative accommodation.

194. Persons listed in article 80 of the Housing Code may not be evicted from dormitories/residences without the provision of alternative accommodation.

195. Eviction from temporary housing and other special-purpose homes occurs when the reason for which the accommodation was provided is no longer applicable (for example, on completion of major repairs or on the provision or procurement of alternative accommodation), and on other grounds set out in the Housing Code and other legislative acts.

196. The rules contained in the Housing Code on eviction without the provision of alternative accommodation (arts. 47, 61, 74, 79, 85 and 119) do not contradict the requirements of article 11 of the Covenant. Under the provisions of these articles of the Housing Code, eviction without the provision of alternative accommodation is permitted when residents of State-owned housing violate the terms and conditions of residence, or in the case of squatting. Moreover, persons deprived of their parental rights may be evicted without the provision of alternative accommodation if they are found to be unfit to live with the children in question.

Article 12
The right to physical and mental health

15. Please provide information on measures taken by the State party to prevent and alleviate food-borne diseases as well as to address the increasing prevalence of overweight among the population.

197. The State Health Inspection Act of 1992, Goods and Services Certification Act of 1993, Food Quality and Safety Act of 1997, Technical Regulations Act of 2009, Prevention of Micronutrient Deficiencies Act of 2010 and Compliance Assessment Act of 2013 are among the national laws adopted to ensure that food and consumer goods produced and traded in Uzbekistan are of high quality and protect the health of consumers.

198. The Food Quality and Safety Act stipulates that the following State bodies are responsible for ensuring food quality and safety: the State Health and Disease Control Service of the Ministry of Health, the Central State Veterinary Department and the Central State Plant Quarantine Inspectorate of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, the Uzbek Standardization, Metrology and Certification Agency and other bodies designated by law.

199. The State ensures food quality and safety standardization by setting health, veterinary and phytosanitary standards, regulations and hygiene guidelines and by establishing State standards and technical specifications (hereinafter referred to as standards and regulations) that set out the requirements for food quality and safety and the conditions in which food is to be produced, stocked, purchased, processed, delivered, stored, transported and sold.

200. Food products and equipment intended for food processing or direct contact with food may be produced, imported into Uzbekistan, sold or used once their conformity with food quality and safety standards and regulations has been assessed and official registration has been obtained.

201. The sole purpose of the Technical Regulations Act is to ensure safety and to control hazards to human life and health and also the environment. The duties of all State bodies empowered to draw up and introduce safety indicators for goods, labour and services are set out explicitly in the Act.

202. Cabinet of Ministers Decision No. 318 of 12 August 2004 on additional measures to simplify goods certification procedures was adopted and Ministry of Health Instruction No. 1525 of 28 November 2005 on procedures for issuing hygiene certificates for food, equipment and consumer goods was issued to ensure that the requirements of the laws mentioned above are met and to introduce a system of mandatory hygiene certification for food and consumer goods imported into or manufactured in the country.

203. Natural and legal persons producing, stocking, purchasing, processing, delivering, storing, transporting and selling food are required to monitor compliance with the established standards and regulations. The procedures for monitoring during production are laid down in accordance with food quality and safety standards and rules and regulatory and technical documents, with due consideration for the characteristics and conditions of the work or service performed, and are approved by the relevant government supervisory bodies.

204. Natural and legal persons responsible for monitoring production are required to suspend any work or service found to be in breach of the standards and rules until the situation is remedied. Food that poses a risk to human life or health may be confiscated, as prescribed by law, pursuant to a decision by the State supervisory authorities.

205. Persons responsible for violations of the food quality and safety legislation are punishable according to the established procedure (articles 53, 166, 169 and 214 of the Administrative Liability Code and article 186 of the Criminal Code).

206. To date, 39 laboratory facilities of the State Public Health Inspectorate have been accredited by the Standardization, Metrology and Certification Agency of Uzbekistan on the basis of international standard ISO/IEC 17025-2007, General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories, to issue hygiene certificates for food and consumer goods produced in or imported into Uzbekistan.

207. The Tashkent Institute for Advanced Medical Training has run technical refresher courses for specialists at the testing laboratory centres of the State Public Health Inspectorate, based on the international hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) system.

208. Uzbekistan has acceded to the European Charter on Counteracting Obesity (Istanbul, 16 November 2006) and the Vienna Declaration on Nutrition and Noncommunicable Diseases in the Context of Health 2020, adopted on 5 July 2013. A draft decision of the Cabinet of Ministers on improving measures to prevent and control non-infectious diseases is currently pending and seeks to strengthen the prevention and control of such diseases by tackling preventable behavioural and biological risk factors such as tobacco use, alcohol

abuse, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, overweight, high blood pressure, high blood sugar levels and high cholesterol levels.

16. In connection with the 2008 Ministry of Health Order No. 403 on the improvement of drug-related assistance, please provide information on the availability and accessibility of drug addiction treatments. Please also provide similar information on smoking cessation support programmes in the State party.

209. A coherent response to drug addiction has been provided in Uzbekistan based on the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (1999), which establishes a range of State-guaranteed drug rehabilitation programmes.

210. The scope of addiction treatment provided by the State is set out in Ministry of Health Order No. 403 of 8 September 2008 concerning the improvement of drug dependence treatment; it includes examinations, counselling, diagnoses, treatment and medico-social rehabilitation.

211. The list of addiction treatment services now available has grown and the introduction of medico-social rehabilitation programmes has made drug abuse treatment more effective.

212. There is a network of specialized drug addiction clinics, which includes the National Drug Control Centre, 15 drug abuse clinics (14 with inpatient units), 2 inpatient drug addiction treatment hospitals and 8 drug addiction treatment units at psychiatric hospitals. There are 34 adolescent health units in the country. There are drug addiction treatment units (170 in total) in every rural district, in the central district clinics. They operate in accordance with the Regulations on medico-social rehabilitation units at drug addiction clinics and the Regulations for assessing the effectiveness of addiction clinics and rehabilitation centres of the health-care system of Uzbekistan.

213. Rehabilitation units have been set up at the National Drug Control Centre (15 beds), the Tashkent Narcotic Drug Clinic (10) and at the provincial narcotic drug clinics in Buxoro (15), Qashqadaryo (10), Namangan (10), Samarqand (20), Surxondaryo (10), Tashkent (7), Farg'ona (10) and Xorazm (10) provinces. All these institutions have well-trained staffs of professional rehabilitation specialists and have developed and run inpatient medico-social drug rehabilitation programmes.

214. A network of day hospitals suitable for outpatient medico-social rehabilitation programmes is planned as a convenient way of introducing the rehabilitation of patients on an outpatient basis. Day hospitals have been set up and outpatient medico-social rehabilitation programmes have been running in 13 drug clinics.

215. State addiction clinics provide services free of charge, as treatment and medico-social rehabilitation are guaranteed by the State. HIV-positive drug addicts are provided with unhindered access to treatment and medico-social rehabilitation on a confidential and anonymous basis so as to protect them against discrimination and stigmatization.

216. There are no waiting lists for drug treatment. Medical rehabilitation services are immediately provided to addicts as soon as they request them. Drug addition clinics under the State health-care system may not deny addicts hospital care or prevent them from voluntary participation in medico-social rehabilitation programmes. In accordance with Ministry of Health Order No. 249 of 22 August 2011, drug addicts may apply to a drug clinic on their own, without a reference from a local drug abuse expert.

217. Drug-related disorders are treated on the basis of the Standards for the diagnosis, treatment and medico-social rehabilitation of patients with drug-related illnesses established by Ministry of Health Order No. 310 of 14 November 2011. In accordance with these standards, drug addiction support services at all levels of the organizational structure

(starting with the district drug clinics) must provide drug treatment to the extent guaranteed by the State.

218. If a patient refuses to take part in a rehabilitation programme, a drug abuse therapist provides individual or group psychotherapy aimed at motivating the patient to refrain from drug use, to follow a course of therapy to prevent a relapse and to receive social and employment assistance.

219. The system of social assistance for drug addicts who have stopped using psychoactive substances has evolved since 2011 in terms of medico-social rehabilitation services. Trained nursing staff (health visitors) help patients to readjust to family and work life and to cope with medical, legal and household matters. In 2012, 1,738 persons received help from social workers and 1,458 were assisted in the first nine months of 2013. Training in confectionery production, shoemaking and sewing is provided to patients in the Surxondaryo province drug addiction clinic.

220. All drug addiction clinics collaborate closely with employment centres and work together to find employment for drug-dependent persons so as to help patients to better adapt to life in society when they are in remission.

221. The Act on the Limitation of the Prevalence and Use of Alcohol and Tobacco Products was adopted in 2011, and Uzbekistan acceded to the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (Geneva, 21 May 2003) in 2012.

222. In accordance with article 8 of the Act, research is being carried out with the Ministry of National Education and support from WHO to assess the prevalence of tobacco use among pupils (13–15 years of age), as part of the Global Youth Tobacco Survey. Standards for the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of alcohol and tobacco addiction were approved by Ministry of Health Order No. 310 of 14 November 2011, and have been communicated to doctors at drug addiction clinics.

223. Tobacco and alcohol packaging warning messages and warning signs at points of sale of alcohol and tobacco products were approved by Decree No. 311 of 17 November 2011 of the Ministry of Health on medical warnings and warning signs; this was done pursuant to paragraph 7 of Cabinet of Ministers Plan of Action No. 07/1-705 of 15 November 2011, implementing Act No. 302 of 5 October 2011 on the Limitation of the Prevalence and Use of Alcohol and Tobacco Products. The wording of the warnings is the same for any type of alcohol or tobacco product.

224. Doctors involved in the system of home care and social work provided by the Soglom Avlod Uchun foundation held 2,337 seminars, meetings, discussions and lectures on healthy lifestyles and the prevention of drug addiction and HIV/AIDS in 2012. There were 181,003 people in attendance at these events, most of them young persons. There were also 1,542 events to prevent tobacco use attended by 114,218 people, and 34,660 pamphlets on the subject were distributed to the participants.

225. Doctors involved in the system of home care and social work provided by the foundation also held 1,738 seminars, meetings, discussions and lectures on drug addiction and HIV/AIDS prevention in the first 10 months of 2013 attended by 114,693 persons. In addition, 2,450 events were held to promote healthy lifestyles and prevent tobacco use, at which 175,193 persons took part and 44,000 pamphlets of seven kinds were handed out.

17. Please provide information on the impact of measures taken to improve water and sanitation management in the State party, including on dialogues with neighbouring countries in this regard. Please provide information on the steps taken to address contamination of soil and water as a result of extensive use of chemicals in agriculture. Please also inform the Committee of the measures taken to mitigate the impact of environmental pollution on the health of the State party's population.

226. Serious consideration is given to upholding the human right to safe drinking water and decent sanitation in Uzbekistan. The field of water use and sanitation is regulated by the Water and Water Use Act of 6 May 1993 and the State Health Inspection Act of 3 July 1992.

227. The Water and Water Use Act prohibits the entry into service of new or revamped equipment unless it is fitted with devices to prevent water pollution and clogging. Citizens have the right as water users to public participation in water resource management decision-making and to form associations, unions and other groups in order to coordinate their efforts related to water matters and to defend their common interests.

228. The rights of water users and consumers may be restricted under the circumstances provided for by law to protect public health or other public interests or to protect the interests of other water users and consumers. This must not adversely affect the conditions for the use of bodies of water for drinking water and to meet household needs.

229. Affordable water and sewerage rates (low rates for the public and reductions of value added tax) guarantee the human right to water and sanitation in Uzbekistan, including for indigent and vulnerable groups. Furthermore, the law does not envisage cutting off water or sewerage services if a physical person or group is in arrears for payment of such services.

230. Under current national law, members of the public pay for water and sewerage services by the tenth of the month following the month in question. Assistance is provided to indigent groups by local self-governing authorities (mahalla committees), including for the payment of public utilities.

231. A programme to improve the supply of drinking water in rural communities was carried out in 2012, under the governmental programme for the Year of the Family, for which 50.795 billion sum was spent from the State budget and 5.700 billion sum was spent by charitable organizations. With $1,690,000 in financial support from the United States Agency for International Development, projects were carried out to improve the water supply in district centres and rural communities of the Boyovut, Xovos, Mirzaobod, Sardoba and Oqoltin districts of Sirdaryo province.

232. With grants of $13,520,000 and $44,500,000, the Asian Development Bank funded projects to improve the water supply and sanitation in Qashqadaryo province and to rehabilitate the water supply and sewerage systems in Qo'qon, Andijon, Farg'ona, Marg'ilon and the district centre of Rishton. The Asian Development Bank extended loans of $22,500,000 to upgrade the Damhodja interregional water main, connect it to the district centres of Navoiy and Buxoro provinces and rebuild the sewerage system in Termiz.

233. Between 2008 and 2012, construction and reconstruction was undertaken on collector drains, open and closed collector-drainage networks, pumping stations and drainage wells, repairs and renovations were done on drainage systems and facilities currently in operation and earth moving and other machinery and equipment were purchased in order to replenish the stock used by State unitary enterprises involved in the reclamation of irrigated land. Such activities were carried out in accordance with Presidential Decree No. 3932 of 29 October 2007 on measures for the fundamental improvement of the land reclamation system and Presidential Decision No. 817 of 19 March 2008 on the State programme for the reclamation of irrigated land for 2008–2012.

234. In order to promote the financial health of water suppliers, a programme to improve and update laws and regulations and guidance on public utilities has been approved under Cabinet of Ministers Decision No. 300 of 6 November 2013 and is to be developed in 2014 and 2015. O'zkommunhizmat, the national public utilities agency, together with the Ministry of the Economy and the Ministry of Finance, have drafted a programme for the

comprehensive development and upgrading of the drinking water and sewerage system in Uzbekistan for the period up to 2020.

235. The State Health Inspection Act establishes the health requirements for water used for household and drinking purposes.

236. State bodies, companies, institutions and associations (regardless of their form of ownership) and individuals are obliged to ensure that the water in reservoirs used for household needs, including water form decentralized sources, complies with the health standards and rules in force.

237. The State Health and Disease Control Service carries out health inspections to ensure compliance with health standards and rules and guidelines of hygienic practice by government bodies, companies, institutions, organizations and associations located in Uzbekistan, regardless of the department to which they belong or form of ownership, and also by individuals.

238. The Environmental Control Act was adopted in 2013 to increase public oversight of water use and protection of the environment.

239. Consistent action is being taken in Uzbekistan not only to improve water supplies to the population but also to ensure access to safe water and sanitation.

240. By law, the State Committee for Nature Protection is responsible for the State monitoring of compliance by ministries, State committees, departments, companies, institutions and organizations and also individuals with laws on the use and protection of land, the subsoil, waters, forests, flora and fauna and the atmosphere. The State Committee's work is aimed at promoting people's health, maintaining an ecological balance and making sound use of natural resources in order to bring about effective and sustainable social and economic development.

241. Work is currently under way to implement a strategy, designed with the participation of specialists from the State Committee for Nature Protection, for the comprehensive development and upgrading of the water and sewerage system of Uzbekistan for the period up to 2020.

242. Following the 2013 inspection schedule, in the first nine months of the year the Committee checked on 799 monitored facilities, investigated some 246,600 sources of environmental pollution, i.e., 13.6 per cent more than during the same period in 2012, and found 14,666 sources of pollution that exceeded established emissions or discharge limits.

243. Administrative proceedings were brought against 17,049 officials and other persons for violations of environmental protection laws, i.e., a 5.1 per cent increase over the same period in 2012. The fines and claims paid for compensation for environmental damage were 47.1 per cent greater than in the first nine months of 2012, amounting to 2,177,880,000 sum.

244. The fines and claims levied for compensation for damage to the environment totalled 2,060,980,000 sum, i.e., 54.9 per cent more than in 2012. There were 133 guns and 1,857 nets seized from poachers. Investigative agencies received 29 case files concerning 43 persons and criminal cases were brought against 13 persons. As a result of the temporary closure of 96 facilities that had been polluting, air pollution emissions were reduced by 14.3 tons.

245. The use of plant protection chemicals in agriculture is regulated by the State Commission for Chemical Use and Plant Protection Products, which is part of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources. The National Plant Protection Centre is responsible for phytosanitary oversight in Uzbekistan. The work of these departments is governed by the Act of 2000 on the Protection of Agricultural Plants against Pests, Diseases and Weeds.

246. Together with chemical plant protection agents, biological pest control has also been widely used on the country's crops and has played a leading role in environmentally safe, integrated plant protection. There are some 900 biological manufacturing plants in operation. Their output protects a harvest area of around 1.5 million ha, without the use of pesticides.

247. The Government has placed much emphasis on supervision of the use and management of plant protection chemicals, as demonstrated by the adoption of the Presidential Decision of 2006 on measures to modernize agricultural chemical plant protection and the Cabinet of Ministers Decision of 2004 on measures to modernize facilities and increase the effectiveness of plant protection services.

248. Pesticide use policy has changed significantly in Uzbekistan over the past decade. There has been a sharp cutback in the amount of pesticide used every year. A new generation of pyrethroids that are highly effective in low doses and pose minimal risk to human health and the environment are increasingly being used as pesticides.

249. A State registry of particularly dangerous chemical compounds that are intended for crop protection but are prohibited from use is updated regularly. It now includes 25 pesticides which are listed as particularly hazardous to public health and the environment.

250. Controlling pollution is also a target issue for non-governmental organizations. The Environmental Movement of Uzbekistan runs a hotline for the purpose of increasing the involvement of communities, local authorities and businesses in the most important State environmental protection programmes and in public environmental oversight.

251. Health inspections were carried out in February and March 2013 at plants of the Suvsoz State unitary enterprise in Bektemir (25 February), Salar and Bozsui (13 March) and Chirchiq (16 March). Legislative Chamber deputies, Environmental Movement activists and specialists from the Central Authority for Control over the Protection and Use of Land and Water Resources of the State Committee for Nature Protection, the Tashkent City Disease Control Centre, the Suvsoz State unitary enterprise and its subsidiary Suvokova took part in these inspections. The results of the inspections were discussed at a meeting of the Committee on Ecology and the Environment of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis on 11 April 2013.

252. On 11 April 2013 the Environmental Movement and the parliamentary Committee held a joint, on-site, enlarged session to study compliance with article 74 (conditions for accepting wastewater discharges into bodies of water) of the Water and Water Use Act, taking the example of Tashkent and Tashkent province.

Articles 13 and 14
The right to education

18. Please provide updated statistical data, disaggregated by sex, rural and urban areas, on enrolment rates at the various levels of education. Please also inform the Committee of the impact of measures taken, such as the building of new education infrastructure, on access to secondary education, vocational training programmes, and higher education, in particular for women.

253. The prioritization of gender considerations and the full (99 per cent) enrolment of all children in primary and general secondary education are guaranteed in Uzbekistan. Tuition in the general education schools in Uzbekistan is provided in seven languages, as follows: Russian in 848 schools, Tajik in 252, Kazakh in 409, Kyrgyz in 59, Karakalpak in 377 and Turkmen in 43. In addition, 3,389 Roma children are educated in the country's schools.

254. Pupils may be educated in their native language if they so wish, and they are all provided with textbooks and training manuals published in Uzbekistan.

255. In the past five years 106 million textbooks and study guides have been printed. Every year, 500,000 pupils entering primary school for the first time are provided with primers and school supplies, amounting to 12 items in all. For the 2014/15 school year alone, there are plans to update 575 textbooks (including 474 new editions and 101 new titles) for pupils in years 1, 2, 3, 8 and 9, with a print run of 34,505,205 copies.

256. In order to raise the educational and cultural level of young people in the country, considerable attention has been given to supplementary child and adolescent education. In accordance with Cabinet of Ministers Decision No. 50 of 28 February 2011 on measures to improve education outside mainstream schools, 211 Barkamol Avlod centres for children have been set up to enhance the system of extramural education for children. The Barkamol Avlod centres currently run 4,358 study groups in 36 areas of technical and artistic endeavours, local history, geography and culture and environmental science. The study groups have welcomed 103,973 children.

257. Special attention is given to improving conditions in general educational institutions. For example, under the State Nationwide Programme for the Development of School Education for 2004–2009, established pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 3431 of 21 May 2004, construction and repair work was done on 8,501 educational facilities serving some 3 million pupils. The Programme included the construction of 351 new school buildings, the complete renovation of 2,470 school buildings and their electrical and plumbing systems, major overhauls at 3,608 school buildings and facilities and normal upkeep of the buildings and facilities at 2,072 schools.

258. Children from disadvantaged families are given special support in accordance with Presidential Decree No. 3017 of 25 January 2002 on the enhancement of targeted support for socially vulnerable segments of the population. Since 1 September 2002, winter clothing has been provided every year to pupils from lower-income families attending elementary and secondary general education schools regardless of gender or ethnicity.

259. There are in total 1,537 secondary-level specialized and vocational schools in the country. The 1,688,283 pupils come from various ethnic backgrounds and groups. The gender enrolment gap narrowed between 2000 and 2012, with the girl-to-boy ratio rising from 0.46 to 0.70.

260. Among the approximately 1.6 million students attending institutions of specialized secondary-level vocational education are 1,533,151 Uzbeks, 33,988 Karakalpaks, 46,415 Tajiks, 31,367 Kazakhs, 18,200 Russians, 9,328 Kyrgyzes, 6,230 Tatars, 630 Armenians and 76 Roma.

261. Today, around 253,412 students attend institutions of higher education, including 222,297 Uzbeks or (87.7 per cent), 9,766 Karakalpaks (3.9 per cent), 5,040 Russians (2 per cent), 4,772 Tajiks (1.9 per cent), 4,640 Kazakhs (1.8 per cent), 2,553 Tatars (1 per cent), 1,520 Koreans (0.6 per cent), 642 Kyrgyzes (0.3 per cent), 505 Turkmens (0.2 per cent), 59 Jews (0.02 per cent), 204 Uighurs (0.1 per cent), 202 Ukrainians (0.1 per cent) and 1,212 members of other ethnic groups (0.5 per cent).

262. At 68 higher education institutions tuition is in Uzbek (206,002 students, or 81.29 per cent of all students), at 66 in Russian (35,994 students, or 14.20 per cent), at 6 in Karakalpak (9,125 students, or 3.60 per cent), at 7 in Kazakh (1,299 students, or 0.51 per cent), at 4 in Tajik (859 students, or 0.34 per cent), at 1 in Kyrgyz (71 students, or 0.03 per cent) and at 1 in Turkmen (62 students, or 0.02 per cent). Women account for 36 per cent of students at institutions of higher education and men 64 per cent.

Article 15
Cultural rights

19. Please indicate to what extent an inventory of the State party cultural heritage has been made and whether protection policies have been implemented following the adoption in 2001 of the Protection and Use of Objects of Cultural Heritage Act and in 2009 of the Protection and Use of Objects of Architectural Heritage Act.

263. Under the Constitution, citizens are required to protect the historical, spiritual and cultural heritage of the peoples of Uzbekistan. Cultural monuments are protected by the State.

264. The Protection and Use of Cultural Heritage Sites Act (as amended in 2005 and 2009) and Cabinet of Ministers Decision No. 269 of 29 July 2002 on measures for the conservation and use of cultural heritage sites have made a positive contribution to the preservation of cultural heritage sites in Uzbekistan. Intangible cultural heritage such as folklore, national epics, songs and festivals has been placed under the protection of the State along with cultural heritage sites.

265. The Land Act, National Property Registers Act, Local Government Act and Urban Planning Code too cover cultural heritage conservation issues. The Cabinet of Ministers adopted a special Decision on laws and regulations for the preservation of intangible cultural heritage on 23 February 2011. Damage to or destruction of cultural heritage sites is punishable under the criminal and administrative law of Uzbekistan.

266. An inventory of cultural heritage sites is carried out every five years under the Protection and Use of Cultural Heritage Sites Act and sites are assigned for protection either at the national or the local level. There are currently 7,570 cultural heritage sites under the protection of the State. The list of such sites was approved by Decree No. 1081 of 12 November 2008 of the Ministry of Culture and Sports.

267. In the provinces, property registration cases are handled by the provincial and municipal inspectorates for the protection and use of cultural heritage sites. To date, 1,021 cultural heritage sites have been registered. Renovations or repairs and other work were carried out on more than 1,000 cultural heritage sites between 2001 and 2013.

268. The Government is cooperating with international organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites on the preservation and use of cultural heritage sites. Members of international organizations are involved in the preservation, management and international appraisal of cultural heritage sites in Uzbekistan nominated for the World Heritage List.

269. There are currently four cities in the country — Xiva, Buxoro, Samarqand and Shahrisabz — with outstanding historical and cultural value and that have thus been included in the UNESCO list of world heritage sites. Documents for the nomination of 18 cultural and natural heritage sites have been prepared and submitted to UNESCO headquarters in Paris. The documents are scheduled for review by the General Assembly of States parties to the World Heritage Convention in June 2014.

270. The Protection and Use of Cultural Heritage Sites Act, adopted in 2009, serves as the legal framework for the assessment and preservation of archaeological heritage. Regulations on the conservation, displacement and protection of archaeological finds were drawn up for the first time under this Act. The record keeping, conservation and use of archaeological finds for scientific, museum and educational purposes are regulated by the Act.

271. Every year, some 30 to 40 archaeological expeditions are carried out (there were 33 in 2013). All archaeological work is performed on the basis of decisions made by the Ministry of Culture and Sports in coordination with the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan. Authorization for such work is granted only to State organizations with at least three professional archaeologists on their staff. All finds are recorded and turned over to State repositories, museums and foundations. Foreign experts take part in archaeological work only as members of Uzbek scientific archaeological expeditions.

Annexes

Table 1
Cotton crop trends, 1991–2012

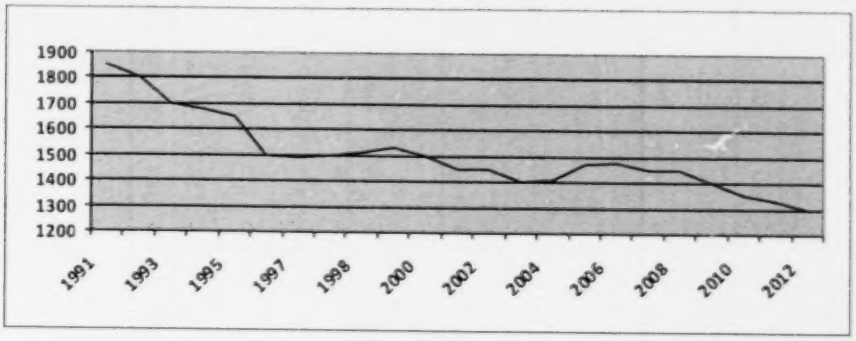

Table 2
Poverty level
(According to sample household surveys)

	2009	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
Republic of Uzbekistan	19.5	17.7	16.0	15.0
Republic of Qoraqalpog'iston	37.0	34.0	33.2	32.5
Provinces:				
Andijon	17.0	16.3	13.3	11.5
Buxoro	16.1	14.4	13.3	12.2
Jizzax	23.1	22.6	21.3	18.7
Qashqadaryo	32.5	28.9	26.8	16.6
Navoiy	20.1	19.6	18.2	16.6
Namangan	25.4	23.1	20.1	17.4
Samarqand	16.6	14.9	13.3	12.9
Surxondaryo	27.8	25.2	23.5	22.6
Sirdaryo	26.1	23.6	22.1	20.3
Tashkent	14.2	12.5	11.2	10.3
Farg'ona	10.8	10.2	9.7	9.6
Xorazm	23.3	20.6	19.1	17.2
City of Tashkent	3.1	2.6	2.3	2.1

Table 3

Status of private farms after agricultural land consolidation

			Including by specialization									
	As at 1 October 2008		*Cotton and cereals*		*Vegetable crops*		*Viticulture and horticulture*		*Animal husbandry*		*Other areas*	
	1 January 2011		*2008*	*2011*	*2008*	*2011*	*2008*	*2011*	*2008*	*2011*	*2008*	*2011*
Number of private farms (thousands)	219 976	66 134	112 233	35 896	16 091	3 647	70 408	16 964	7 923	5 329	13 321	4 298
Average land area	27	80	37	106	10	23	3	13	154	205	7	18

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources.

Table 4

Information on the total number of pupils in academic lycées and vocational colleges in the 2013/14 school year in cities, district centres and rural areas

	Number of students			*Number of students broken down by courses*								
Location of academic and vocational secondary schools	***Total***	*Number of girls*	*%*	***Total number of first-year students***	*Number of girls*	*%*	***Total number of second-year students***	*Number of girls*	*%*	***Total number of third-year students***	*Number of girls*	*%*
Academic lycées and vocational colleges in cities	**519 651**	245 556	47.3	**171 718**	81 526	47.5	**171 718**	81 359	47.4	**176 215**	82 671	46.9
Academic lycées and vocational colleges in district centres	**381 269**	194 965	51.1	**123 842**	62 701	50.6	**127 117**	65 160	51.3	**130 310**	67 104	51.5
Academic lycées and vocational colleges in rural areas	**739 746**	353 990	47.9	**240 046**	115 997	48.3	**248 353**	118 131	47.6	**251 347**	119 862	47.7
Total	**1 640 666**	**794 511**	**48.4**	**535 606**	**260 224**	**48.6**	**547 188**	**264 650**	**48.4**	**557 872**	**269 637**	**48.3**